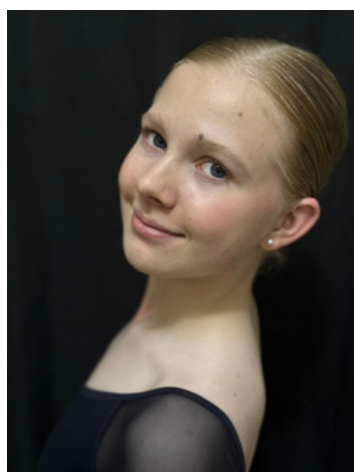


STATE FINALS EDITION

MISSISSIPPI MUSIC TEACHER

The Official Publication of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Margo Bennett

Margo Bennett is a homeschooled student enrolled in the South Mississippi Ballet Theatre Day Program. She is the daughter of Andrew and Jana Bennett of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Margo has studied piano with Dr. Laura Broughton since the age of six and has been an active participant in the Mississippi Music Teachers Association (MMTA) Pre-College Finals since 2017. During this time, she has earned Gold Medals in both the piano solo and duet categories and has received recognition for her outstanding composite scores.

In addition to MMTA, Margo has participated in the Mississippi Federation of Music Clubs festivals, where she consistently received superior ratings in solo divisions. She has also earned numerous honors, including a scholarship to attend Music Camp at Mississippi College.



Inside This Issue



Outstanding
Achievement
Award
Winners
P. 1

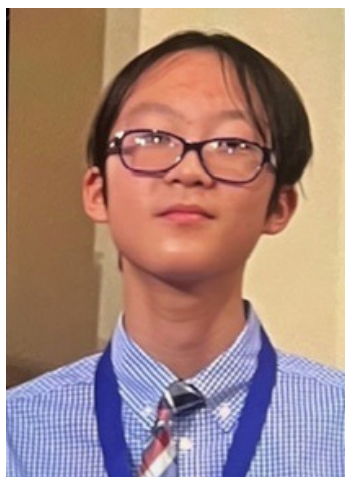


State Finals
Winners
P. 3

AFFILIATED WITH
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ASSOCIATION

Margo regularly participates in the Hattiesburg Music Teachers League Composer Festivals and was selected to perform a commissioned work written specifically for the festival. Through HMTL, she has also been chosen to perform in the Honors Recital in Hattiesburg for the past two years. Margo has further enjoyed performing at the Bach Festival at Mississippi College, where she presented renowned Baroque repertoire, and she has appeared annually at the Hattiesburg Keyboard Festival. At these events, she has continued to develop her love for hymns, demonstrating strong sight-reading skills, technical proficiency, and musical expression.

In addition to her musical accomplishments, Margo is an accomplished ballet dancer. She placed in the Top 25 for both classical and contemporary variations at ADC IBC in 2024 and earned second place in small ensembles in 2026, as well as second place in large ensembles in 2025 and 2026 at YAGP. She has performed in numerous ballet productions with companies such as South Mississippi Ballet Theatre, Ballet Mississippi, and World Ballet Theatre. Margo has also attended prestigious ballet intensives across the country, including Next Generation Ballet, John Cranko New York, and Nashville Ballet.



Lucas Zheng

Lucas Zheng is the son of Congzhi Zheng and Weirong Wang, and is the brother of Alina and Tiana Zheng. He is currently beginning his senior year at Oak Grove High School. For the past 9 years, Lucas has studied piano under Dr. Laura Broughton. He has participated in NFMC for 9 years and has received a superior rating in piano solo and musicianship theory for 9 consecutive years. Lucas has also showcased his talents at several HMTL composers festivals, performing for composers such as Glenda Austin, Carolyn Miller, Melody Bober, Kelvin Olson, and Catherine Rollin. Not only did Lucas perform in front of these composers, he also created posters every year depicting his piece, where he was awarded 1st, 3rd, and honorable mention twice in the festival poster contests. Lucas has also participated in the MMTA district evaluations for 7 years, where he has qualified every year to compete in MMTA finals.

During that period, he has placed in the top 3 finalists in his grade level for 5 out of the 8 years and in 2026 Lucas tied for the Gold Medal in Piano solo level 11. In 2023 and 2026, Lucas received the highest composite score for level 8 and 11. In collaboration with his sister Alina, he earned the Gold Medal in Division D Ensemble in 2025 and 2nd place in Division E Ensemble in 2026.

STATE FINALS EDITION

At Oak Grove, Lucas is an active member and section leader of the Oak Grove High School Band and has earned the distinct honor to commence the Marching band show for two years in a row. Lucas is also heavily involved in his school's chess club, where he recently placed 9 out of 117 in a local online chess tournament. Lucas is also the vice president of Mu Alpha Theta and member of the National Honors Society and Beta Club. Academically, Lucas is at the top of his class, consistently earning a spot on the All "A" Honor Roll, has received awards for the highest average in his class on multiple occasions, and, notably, he was the only student in his class to achieve a perfect score on the Biology State test in 2024. In May Lucas will officially graduate from Oak Grove High School.



2026 MMTA STATE FINALS

MAY 16, 2026 - MISSISSIPPI CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Piano Solo Level 3 & Below

Gold Medal: Theolyn Hopper (Carol Mahler)
Ava Jiang (Donna Reed)
2nd Place: Kate Ashley (Jeanne Evans)
Siwan Winter (Carol Mahler)
3rd Place: Hiro Diao (Bill Harned)
Madeline Wong (Donna Reed)
4th Place: Emma Ai (Rosângela Sebba)
Charlotte Nida (Laura Broughton)
Jeffrey Zhang (Bill Harned)
Honorable Mention: Lorelai Dohmen
(Rosângela Sebba)
Eddie Mac Hale
(Sandy Coutoumanos)
Bernadette McFall
(Rachel Storey)
Duke Payne (Joanna Burnside)
Mia Qi (Donna Reed)
Veer Singh (Janine Beasley)
Lillian Tian (Seth Matlock)
Sir Vaughan (Barbara Tracy)
Serena Wu (Donna Reed)

Piano Solo Level 4

Gold Medal: Catherine Amundson (Donna Reed)
Hansel Tan (Yoojung Kim)
2nd Place: Chenyi Yang (Joanna Burnside)
3rd Place: Anna Guan (Victoria Johnson)
Willow Hudgins (Patience Pierini)
4th Place: Selina Chen (Carol Durham)
Linda Zheng (Rachel Heard)
Honorable Mention: Paisley Champion
(Melissa Champion)
Hannah Ghahremani
(Sophie Wang)
Webb Hardin (Janine Beasley)
Shawn Huang (Sophie Wang)

Piano Solo Level 5

Gold Medal: Yan Zhang (Katie Johnson)

2nd Place: Prudence Zamm (Bonnie Sheldon)

Lisa Zheng (Rachel Heard)

3rd Place: Frank Yan (Carol Durham)

4th Place: Annie Meng (Jenna Klein)

Honorable Mention: Alex An (Donna Reed)

Piano Solo Level 6

Gold Medal: Evalyn Wu (Katie Johnson)

Audrey Yang (Carol Mahler)

2nd Place: Cody Zhu (Rachel Heard)

3rd Place: Molly Karen Mumbower (Katie Johnson)

4th Place: Kahlan Nguyen (Laura Broughton)

Luck Mei (Donna Banks)

Honorable Mention: Wagner Harris (Janine Beasley)

Piano Solo Level 7

Gold Medal: Madeline Bond (Carol Mahler)

Oscar Yang (Rachel Heard)

2nd Place: Judah Brown (Katie Johnson)

Sophia Tan (Ian Hominick)

3rd Place: Anna Colbert (Donna Reed)

Mazie Garner (Sandy Coutoumanos)

Robert King (Brian Murphy)

Suhyeon Winter (Carol Mahler)

4th Place: Nolan Cromer (Paula Henderson)

Lilly Harper (Janine Beasley)

Bryan Sescu (Jenna Klein)

Jordyn Shroyer (Ruth Keyes)

Abigail Wong (Donna Reed)

Honorable Mention: Everly Jones (Carol Durham)

Carmryn Lowry (Paula Henderson)

Athray Senthil (Laura Callahan)

Ali Claire Simpson (Ruth Keyes)

Daniel Wu (Donna Reed)

Zoey Yan (Carol Durham)

Piano Solo Level 8

Gold Medal: Eddie Yucheng Lin (Ellen Elder)
2nd Place: Kohen Johnson (Joanna Burnside)
3rd Place: Effia Wu (Bill Harned)
4th Place: Brandon Zhu (Rachel Heard)

Piano Solo Level 9

Gold Medal: Yihang Wang (Rachel Heard)
2nd Place: Austin Yang (Rachel Heard)
3rd Place: Sonia Sumner (Victoria Johnson)
4th Place: Sydney Thornton (Katie Johnson)
Honorable Mention: Charlotte Cromer (Paula Henderson)
Timur Gabitov (Dylan Hall)
Kara Gaughf (Brenda Sullivan)
Caleb Hinton (Paula Henderson)
Caroline Lowry (Paula Henderson)
Aryav Mehta (Donna Banks)
Sarah Vanderloo (Donna Reed)
Alina Zheng (Laura Broughton)

Piano Solo Level 10

Gold Medal: Luca Ciraldo (Victoria Johnson)
Victor Tan (Ian Hominick)
2nd Place: Lennox Myers (Carol Mahler)
3rd Place: Levi Mei (Donna Banks)
4th Place: Nathan Bai (Victoria Johnson)

Piano Solo Level 11

Gold Medal: Sofia Escobedo (Carol Mahler)
Lucas Zheng (Laura Broughton)
2nd Place: Bruce Pang (Donna Reed)
Angelina Tan (Sophie Wang)
3rd Place: Kiana Li (Victoria Johnson)
4th Place: Lydia Grace Crouch (Victoria Johnson)
Brayden Whitehead (Sandy Coutoumanos)
Honorable Mention: Margo Bennett (Laura Broughton)
Miles Hansen (Angela Powell)
Titus Miller (Carol Durham)

Piano Solo Level 12

Gold Medal: Alice Astarlioglu (Carol Durham)

2nd Place: Alayna Johnson (Joanna Burnside)

Piano Ensemble Division B

Gold Medal: Prudence Zamm & John Zamm (Bonnie Sheldon)

2nd Place: Paisley Eddy & Abigail Payne (Janine Beasley)

3rd Place: Olivia Payne & Abigail Payne (Janine Beasley)

Piano Ensemble Division C

Gold Medal: Madeline Bond & Audrey Yang (Carol Mahler)

2nd Place: William Marett & Bryan Sescu (Rosângela Sebba & Jenna Klein)

Piano Ensemble Division E

Gold Medal: Kiana Li & Sonia Sumner (Victoria Johnson)

2nd Place: Alina Zheng & Lucas Zheng (Laura Broughton)

3rd Place: Amelia Bennett & Margo Bennett (Laura Broughton)

Piano Sonata/Sonatina Division A

Gold Medal: Catherine Amundson (Donna Reed)

Brooke Tao (Carol Mahler)

2nd Place: Theolyn Hopper (Carol Mahler)

Madeline Wong (Donna Reed)

3rd Place: Hansel Tan (Yoojung Kim)

Serena Wu (Donna Reed)

4th Place: Ava Jiang (Donna Reed)

Mia Qi (Donna Reed)

Piano Sonata/Sonatina Division B

Gold Medal: Alex An (Donna Reed)

2nd Place: Yan Zhang (Katie Johnson)

3rd Place: Rachel Choi (Jenna Klein)

Thomas Farthing (Donna Reed)

4th Place: Andy Goodson (Barbara Tracy)

Honorable Mention: Julian Soderberg (Barbara Tracy)

Piano Sonata/Sonatina Division C

Gold Medal: Phuong Nguyen (Donna Reed)

2nd Place: Abigail Wong (Donna Reed)

3rd Place: Daniel Wu (Donna Reed)

STATE FINALS EDITION

Piano Sonata/Sonatina Division D

Gold Medal: Iane Zhu (Rachel Heard)

Piano Sonata/Sonatina Division E

Gold Medal: Bruce Pang (Donna Reed)

2nd Place: Sofia Escobedo (Carol Mahler)

Piano Theme & Variations Division B

Gold Medal: Audrey Yang (Carol Mahler)

Piano Theme & Variations Division C

Gold Medal: Ali Claire Simpson (Ruth Keyes)

Piano Theme & Variations Division D

Gold Medal: Sonia Sumner (Victoria Johnson)

2nd Place: Nathan Bai (Victoria Johnson)

Piano Theme & Variations Division E

Gold Medal: Kiana Li (Victoria Johnson)

Strings Solo Level 4

Gold Medal: Brooke Tao (Marta Turianska)

Strings Solo Level 5

Gold Medal: Daniel Tucker (Marta Turianska)

Strings Solo Level 7

Gold Medal: Tiana Zheng (Gail Fox)

2nd Place: Elliot Tucker (Daniela Pardo)

3rd Place: Jessica Chen (Armee Hong)

4th Place: Audrey Liu (Carol Mahler)

Strings Solo Level 8

Gold Medal: Vi Nguyen (Armee Hong)

2nd Place: Delilah Bond (Emily Mahler)

Strings Solo Level 9

Gold Medal: Emily Winter (Emily Mahler)

2nd Place: Alexander Russo (Andrea Beltran Landers)

Strings Solo Level 10

Gold Medal: Henry Tucker (Marta Turianska)

2nd Place: Clementine Hale (Emily Mahler)

Strings Solo Level 11

Gold Medal: Winnie Chen (Armee Hong)

Solo Voice Level 3 Musical Theater

Gold Medal: Veer Singh (Janine Beasley)

2nd Place: Kate Ashley (Jeanne Evans)

Solo Voice Level 4 Musical Theater

Gold Medal: Paisley Champion (Melissa Champion)

Solo Voice Level 7 Musical Theater

Gold Medal: Lucy Flynt (Laura Broughton)

2nd Place: Anna Noel Munden (Melissa Champion)

Solo Voice Level 7 Classical

Gold Medal: Lucy Flynt (Laura Broughton)

Solo Voice Level 9 Classical

Gold Medal: Avery Warf (Eva Hart)

2nd Place: Lillian Griner (Eva Hart)

Solo Voice Level 7 Classical

Gold Medal: Bennett O'Quinn (Eva Hart)

2nd Place: Phillip Browning (Eva Hart)

Outstanding Achievement Awards:

Lucas Zheng

Margo Bennett

270+ Highest Composite Score:

Serena Wu (Piano 3rd & Below)

360 Highest Composite Score:

Grayson Goggans - 4th (piano)

Brooke Tao - 4th (strings)

Annie Meng - 5th (piano)

Evalyn Wu - 6th (piano)

Ali Claire Simpson - 7th (piano)

Oscar Wang - 7th (piano)

Madeline Bond - 7th (piano)

Tiana Zheng - 7th (strings)

Lucos Ma - 8th (piano)

Delila Bond - 8th (strings)

Yihan Wang - 9th (piano)

Emily Winter - 9th (strings)

Levi Mei - 10th (piano)

Clementine Hale - 10th (strings)

Lucas Zheng - 11th (piano)

Alayna Johnson - 12th (piano)

The officers and membership of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association extend their congratulations to all those who participated in the 2026 Pre-College Evaluations at the local levels and to those who are honored in this Special Edition of the MMT as participants in the 2026 Pre-College State Finals at Mississippi Christian University in Clinton on May 16, 2026.

Mississippi Music Teachers Association

Est. 1954

The purpose and goals of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association are to further the art of music, and promote the growth and professional development of its members by providing programs that encourage and support teaching, performance, composition and research. MMTA is a not-for-profit organization whose funds are used solely to accomplish these objectives.



MISSISSIPPI
ARTS COMMISSION



For a list of current officers, visit

<https://msmusicteachers.org/officers.php>

For a list of upcoming events, visit

<https://msmusicteachers.org/calendar.php>